

SCHOOL SAFETY ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

AUGUST 30, 2018



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August 30, 2018

"We are in this together." Dr. Leigh Wall, Superintendent of Santa Fe ISD, concluded remarks with these words on May 18, 2018 after the horrific and unthinkable act of violence at Santa Fe High School. This simple and profound sentiment still holds true today.

We are all in this together as we struggle, grieve, and heal after the unspeakable tragedy that took the lives of our fellow Texans.

We are all in this together as we encourage school districts to adopt and implement high-quality and multidisciplinary safety strategies to improve campus security based on district, student, and community needs.

We are all in this together as we and continue to design the long-term campus safety action and response resources needed at the state, local, and federal levels.

Local, state, and federal officials, community members, students, teachers, and caring Texans all share the common goal of making schools a place where parents feel safe to send their children. This shared ambition was apparent as individuals representing various interests and expertise came together in the Governor's School Safety Roundtable Discussions to come up with significant recommendations for safe and secure campuses. Our goal is being realized as school districts put in place immediate and long-term plans aimed at prevention and protection.

Over the summer, school districts have made impressive strides in implementing these plans. School districts have improved campus security by utilizing available school safety measures from the numerous recommendations included in the Governor's School and Firearm Safety Action Plan. By utilizing resources highlighted by TEA Commissioner Mike Morath and by listening to local feedback on what safety measures are needed in community meetings organized by school boards like in Santa Fe ISD, school districts and public charter schools across our state have demonstrated a clear commitment to increasing the safety and security of Texas schools.

As we look to the possibilities that a new school year may bring, please remember that the Governor's School and Firearm Safety Action Plan is a starting point. The safety measures taken from the plan and established by school districts over the summer will help keep our students safer this school year, but this effort must continue to ensure our students' future safety. We encourage everyone in Texas to continue the school safety discussion and continue to make the effort to keep state's greatest treasure, our children, safe in their learning environment.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Greg Abbott".

GREG ABBOTT
Governor

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mike Morath".

MIKE MORATH
TEA Commissioner

BETTER PROTECTING OUR STUDENTS & TEACHERS

Following the tragic school shooting in Santa Fe, Texas, on May 18, 2018, and the release of Governor Greg Abbott's School and Firearm Safety Action Plan (School Safety Plan) on May 30, 2018, there has been a renewed and vigorous statewide effort to prioritize the safety of all Texas school students. The Governor requested that appropriate state agencies and ISD personnel devote significant time and resources to this imperative throughout the summer with the goal of making Texas school safer by the start of the new school year.

The Texas Senate and the Texas House have also shown leadership in this area. With over ten hearings in both chambers about school safety, there has been a significant push by the Texas Legislature to increase its grasp of the scope of the issue and legislative solutions to these pressing problems.

Lt. Governor Dan Patrick and Speaker Joe Straus charged their committees with examining school safety issues.

The Senate Select Committee on Violence in Schools and School Security held committee hearings and issued their findings in a [report](#). The various [House committees assigned](#) to examine several of the school safety issues have held committee hearings.

State agencies have been involved in championing school safety as well. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has taken significant steps to respond to the Santa Fe tragedy and support all Texas schools as they seek to become safer learning environments for their students. The Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) is working with TEA, local mental and behavioral health authorities, and others to improve students' access to mental health services and to increase mental health first aid training opportunities for school personnel.

The recent incident at Taylor ISD, where three students were planning an attack on their school, reminds all Texans that we must remain vigilant. Due to the security protocols in the district, the school quickly responded to the threat. Coordination from the classroom teacher to the school principal to the school resource officer led to the district arresting the students within one hour of the threats. Because of a new program implemented by the district to invite law enforcement officers to be present on school premises when possible — an idea that was recommended in the Governor's School Safety Plan — there was already a member of local law enforcement at the campus.

The following summary highlights recent actions of school districts and state agencies to increase the safety of all Texas students. This summary is not intended to be comprehensive but it does reflect the excellent work of school districts, state agencies, legislators, and law enforcement officials have done to increase the security of our schools.

SCHOOL RESPONSES TO THE GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL SAFETY ACTION PLAN

PREVENTING THREATS IN ADVANCE

The Governor's School Safety Plan emphasizes the need to prevent security threats in advance through early identification of students who are in crisis and the provision of services to those students. Many districts across the state were already engaged in this effort, and several have made notable advances in this regard in direct response to the Governor's plan.

The response from districts across the state to engage in the difficult work of building out mental and behavioral health resources has been substantial. As Texas continues to engage in this work, these districts can serve as role models for others wishing to make improvements using existing staff and resources.

Comal ISD has developed a program that will utilize existing resources to create a comprehensive threat assessment program on each campus that filters up to the district level. Comal Student Action Teams (C-SAT) will consist of an administrator, counselor, nurse, teacher, and a licensed specialist in school psychology. C-SATs will assess students who are at risk academically and behaviorally (including attendance), or who have made a threat against themselves or others. In order to provide comprehensive and integrated care, these teams will coordinate with a district-level counselor to make sure appropriate resources are provided to address the causes of the behavior. This district-level counselor will also conduct home visits and connect families with resources in the community.

Frisco ISD has identified ways in which counselors are utilized ineffectually and have attempted to address a counselor's role on campus. In an effort to further support students, Frisco ISD is hiring 38 additional campus instructional support facilitators to take over testing and other duties to make more qualified and licensed counselors available to meet with students to help them be successful. Student assistance coordinators will also be available to provide individual, group, and crisis counseling.

Cy Fair ISD (CFISD) is launching two district-wide mental health intervention teams which each consist of two licensed professional counselors, one school psychologist, and one mental health officer. These teams will provide screenings and follow-ups, individual counseling, consultation, meditation, and referrals. CFISD is also providing educational materials to parents on warning signs they can look for in their children and other mental health information.

Conroe ISD has finalized an agreement with a local mental health authority (LMHA) — Tri-County Behavioral Healthcare — to provide mental health services at two campuses as part of a pilot program. Beginning this school year, Tri-County will house several staff members at one elementary school and one middle school. These staff may offer crisis intervention and assessment services as well as individual, family, and group counseling. Another LMHA, Bluebonnet Trails, already provides services through Hutto ISD and Elgin ISD, and the LMHA is exploring a partnership with Leander ISD.

Prior to the Parkland High School shooting, and partly in response to the trauma caused by Hurricane Harvey, Texas Can Academies charter school network launched a new program on May 1 to provide a 24/7 confidential counseling crisis hotline, and access to three free off-campus counseling appointments to students across all 13 of its campuses.

School districts are harnessing the power of technology to help prevent threats and deliver support services.

- Texas City ISD is implementing new strategies that include hiring more deputies, providing teachers with emergency training, and implementing a new communication system (working with MutualLink) that will improve response time to an emergency.

- Katy ISD implemented KatyConnect, a crisis hotline available 24/7 to secondary students who need to talk to a trained and certified counselor about a problem they are experiencing. In addition to the phone line, there are texting and chat components, which allow students to communicate concerns in the manner most comfortable for them.
- Frisco ISD has launched STOP !T, an app where students can report threats and concerns. STOP !T allows two-way communication for administrators to respond with questions, even if the tip is anonymous. Students or staff can upload screen shots, pictures, and videos to share with administrators, which the district believes will also be a useful tool in cases of cyberbullying.
- College Station ISD will begin using P3, an app that allows anonymous reporting, at its middle and high schools this school year. Students will be able to report incidents related to various threats. The app allows two-way communication so the staff member who receives the tip can ask follow-up questions or get clarification from the person making the report. Bryan ISD will also be utilizing the P3 app.

MAKING SCHOOLS SAFER

The Governor's School Safety Plan encouraged school boards to discuss all school hardening options with members of their community, including parents, teachers, principals, and other stakeholders. When paired with prevention and behavioral threat assessment programs, hardening strategies become powerful school safety tools.

School districts have multiple defense options when it comes to providing security personnel for a school campus. Whether it be creating a district police department, collaborating with local law enforcement to have a presence on campus, hiring veterans as security resource officers, approving school personnel to be trained as a school marshal, or a combination of security services, school boards are able to choose the best security program for their district.

Round Rock ISD, for one, is considering the creation of a police department. Round Rock Board of Trustees approved a resolution that calls for "the further exploration and consideration of the establishment of a police department in collaboration with local law enforcement partners and a plan for engaging the community in the process." A community task force began meeting to explore options for providing police presence and security on campuses, including the possibility of establishing a district police department.

Arp ISD is a small district of around 800 students which formed a district police department. Arp ISD hired a police chief who will be in charge of all emergency operations.

Waxahachie ISD (WISD), in particular, has taken extensive steps to increase the number of campus-based security personnel. The district is implementing a School Marshal Program with a goal of appointing at least one appropriately qualified and trained school marshal at each campus of the district. WISD has also opted to implement a Guardian Plan with select volunteers meeting appropriate qualifications to undergo training similar to that required of school marshals.

The Governor's School Safety Plan encouraged districts to increase collaboration with local law enforcement agencies. Waxahachie ISD is also hiring local law enforcement to work at all WISD campuses during the school day. Additionally, the district has created a teen leadership program at junior high campuses that works directly with district security officers and SROs. The district is continuing to work with and train community members to provide visibility and volunteer security, specifically targeting retired law enforcement and veterans. This includes encouraging first responders and law enforcement to be on district campuses with workspaces, free lunches, and other incentives.

Mexia Police Department has partnered with Mexia ISD to provide School Resource Officers on school campuses. These organizations embarked upon a collaborative program for school security, working with local and regional agencies to implement many of the action items in the Governor's School Safety Plan. Mexia Police Department has coordinated with the police departments of surrounding cities such as Groesbeck, Wortham, and Coolidge to create integrated response plans with building blueprints shared across cities and available to each patrol officer. These response plans are the result of security assessments conducted over the summer at the request of the respective ISDs and leverage the expertise of each department.

Additionally, Mexia ISD has provided office space for Texas Department of Public Safety state troopers to complete reports. They also provide a free lunch for any police officer who comes to eat at the school cafeteria.

College Station ISD is working with both the College Station Police Department and Brazos County Sheriff's Office to increase security on its campuses. College Station Police Department will have a presence on the elementary and intermediate campuses. Officers will also be present at school-wide events. Officers had previously only carried their duty pistol on their person, with long rifles stored outside the building. They are now equipped to securely store patrol rifles in their offices. The Brazos County Sheriff's Office will have access to the district's campus camera systems, so they can see live what is happening on any campus at a given time.

College Station ISD officials have also been working with law enforcement agencies to walk officers through the facilities, so they can create updated response plans and familiarize themselves with the campuses. The district has provided law enforcement agencies with updated building maps and worked with each to develop a door numbering system to aid in any emergency response.

Corpus Christi ISD is partnering with DPS to increase the presence of law enforcement around schools in order for troopers to foster relationships with students and faculty at campuses in their patrolling areas. Troops assigned to Nueces County will tour Corpus Christi ISD campuses in order to familiarize themselves with the facilities in case of an emergency. The district is also working with the Nueces County Sheriff's Office to develop a school-based law enforcement class.

Pflugerville ISD partnered with the Williamson County Sheriff's Office and the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement to make a campus available for school marshal training, ensuring that the experience was as valuable as possible. Williamson County Sheriff's Office has worked with multiple school districts within its jurisdiction to provide training to officers in school facilities and allow officers to hone their skills in real-world environments.

Districts across Texas considered infrastructure hardening, contemplated structural improvements, and made safety decisions based on community feedback and their local needs. Many districts opted to improve or update existing facilities to make students even safer. Clear Creek ISD, Dickinson ISD, Magnolia ISD, and other ISDs have all made various safety upgrades on their campuses.

School hardening can take several different forms and approaches unique to each school district's needs. These districts chose to make defense improvements as follows:

- Santa Fe ISD is improving main entrances with the installation of nine metal detectors received from Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick and reinforcing vestibules with concrete walls and bullet-resistant glass. The district is increasing classroom security with additional locks and panic buttons and is hiring 10 civilian security assistants and five more ISD police officers.
- Belton ISD is improving security for entrances and adding more surveillance cameras. The district also hired two peace officers who will serve as a coordinator of emergency preparedness and a coordinator of safety. These new staff members will be a part of the district's approach to threat assessments.
- Comal ISD has made several facilities upgrades throughout the district including increasing the camera coverage throughout district facilities, upgrading classroom door locks, installing push button locks on all main entrance interior campus doors, adding secure vestibules at main campus entrances where they currently do not exist, and modifying current public address systems at all campuses to ensure emergency communication can be successfully delivered.
- Katy ISD will be utilizing controlled access systems to unlock main entrance doors on campuses at a set time each morning. The district has heightened security for visitors through these controlled access systems as well and will be requiring visitors to show a government-issued ID.
- Texas City ISD has hired an additional 8 deputies through the Galveston County Sheriff's Office. These changes will include the creation of a new K-9 unit in the district. TCISD recently became a federally recognized emergency responding agency through FirstNet/AT&T. This system gives deputies and administrators the ability to have communication priority on a nationwide public safety broadband network. These tools integrate with existing camera systems to provide emergency response personnel with real time video and audio as an event is taking place.
- Archer City ISD has added more security cameras, bulletproof glass to protect the entrance of the school, and blue pulls. The blue pulls are similar to fire alarms and, upon engagement, alert every law enforcement agency, student, parent, and school administrator of a school threat via text.
- China Spring ISD has installed alarms on exterior doors and deadbolt locks on every classroom door.
- Bryan ISD has added the ability for principals to lock outside doors on their campuses allowing them to only be accessed via a key card.

- Denton ISD has changed the entry points on certain campuses, streamlining access and allowing the installation of secure entry systems. Elementary schools will be the first to receive these secure entry systems which will require visitors to be visible on camera before entering the building.
- San Angelo ISD has added more than 1,000 high definition security cameras across its campuses. San Angelo Police Department has access to the camera feeds for emergency situations. Automatic lockdown buttons have been installed in all of the elementary buildings and will eventually be on all of the campuses. Other added measures include fencing and secure entry vestibules.

Many districts are also instituting clear bag policies either for student backpacks or event venues. These include: Katy ISD, Cy-Fair ISD, Austin ISD, Hearne ISD, Lake Travis ISD, Lubbock-Cooper ISD, Miller Grove ISD, Northeast ISD, Franklin ISD, Ennis ISD, Tyler ISD, La Vega ISD, DeSoto ISD, Alpine ISD, and Castleberry ISD.

AGENCY RESPONSES TO THE GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL SAFETY ACTION PLAN

PREVENTING THREATS IN ADVANCE

The Governor's School Safety Plan not only provided school districts with school safety recommendations and resources, but it also provided guidance to state agencies on ways to best support the state's mission to keep our school students safer and to prevent threats.

TEA met with the 20 Education Service Center (ESC) leaders to share information on Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training opportunities and the need to increase MHFA training in their regions. TEA is working with the ESCs on strengthening the implementation of MHFA training and has asked each ESC to designate a point of contact for MHFA training. HHSC and TEA are working together to create a coordinated plan to implement MHFA training throughout the state. HHSC and TEA have agreed to meet quarterly to review data and assess progress and will develop further guidance to encourage increased collaboration among ESCs, local mental health authorities (LMHAs), local behavioral health authorities (LBHAs), and local education agencies (LEAs).

TEA has included information about MHFA training on their website on the [school safety resources webpage](#) as well as on their [mental and behavioral health webpage](#). This information is also available on the [Mental Health Texas](#) webpage.

From June 1 through August 31, 384 MHFA training classes were scheduled to be offered by LMHAs and LBHAs. According to preliminary data collected by HHSC, 1,705 public school employees attended MHFA training courses during June and July. This is a 90% increase from the summer of 2017.

The Texas School Safety Center has partnered with SIGMA Threat Management to conduct behavioral threat assessment trainings across the state. These programs have focused on providing administrators and teachers with the tools to properly assess troubling behaviors from students and develop interventions. One of these events in Waco, Texas, provided training to over one hundred educators in the Central Texas area across multiple ISDs.

The Department of Public Safety immediately expanded the [iWatchTexas program](#) to include school incidents as reported via mobile app, internet, or phone by students, teachers, parents, and others in the statewide centralized system that will provide law enforcement the opportunity to detect and prevent an attack. Prior to the start of the new school year, the iWatchTexas mobile app was updated with a specific option to report a school safety related incident and includes a new drop down menu where the school can be selected from a list of school campuses, community colleges, and universities for better reporting and response. TEA partnered with DPS to inform the development and rollout.

In its role organizing and coordinating the Texas Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Network, HHSC has initiated using the agency's monthly CISM Network team phone calls to share information on how the teams can better respond to incidents that occur within the school environment. HHSC is also promoting training opportunities relating to serving school communities to the fifteen Texas CISM Network teams and to the nine CISM teams that serve Texas but are not officially part of the Texas CISM Network. Additionally, TEA will be joining the Disaster Behavioral Health (DBH) Consortium meetings hosted by HHSC. The DBH Consortium facilitates communication, improves disaster planning, and increases coordination between disaster behavioral health response agencies during and after local, state, and federal declared emergencies, incidents, or disasters.

MAKING SCHOOLS SAFER

State agencies and local officials have answered the Governor's challenge to help make schools safer with additional programs, increased trainings, information and resources readily distributed, and law enforcement and school collaboration at levels previously not seen.

TEA has developed a [school safety resource website](#) for schools that provides information on training opportunities, provides an archive repository of TEA's guidance provided on school safety via to the Administrator Addressed (TAA) correspondence, and provides links to additional helpful resources for local education agencies.

Extensive trainings have taken place over the summer to equip districts before the start of school. With funding made available by the Office of the Governor, the Texas School Safety Center has worked with TCOLE to provide trainings to 528 people. These trainings have included the following:

- Introductory School-Based Law Enforcement Training Course
- School Based Law Enforcement Train the Trainer
- Standard Response Protocol / Standard Reunification Method
- Behavioral Threat Assessment
- Emergency Operations Plan Development

TEA has applied for several federal grants related to school safety. These include:

- STOP School Violence: Threat Assessment and Technology Reporting Program could provide \$462,451 to work in collaboration with the Texas School Safety Center and SIGMA Threat Management to support the statewide development, implementation, and operation of school threat assessment teams through a statewide training program.
- STOP School Violence: Prevention and Mental Health Training Program requested \$1M to assist LEAs in obtaining the needed mental health training for staff and administrators. The focus in year 1 of the grant will be on the three LEAs in Texas that have recently experienced school shootings. Year 2 and 3 funds will be awarded in a competitive grant process to LEAs.
- COPS: School Violence Prevention Program requested \$500,000 to assist LEAs in developing comprehensive school safety assessments and school safety plans.
- SAMHSA Aware: Requested \$1.8M per year for five years to provide evidence-based mental health services and supports to 15 high-need schools in the Hurricane Harvey-impacted regions. This will build partnerships for school mental health with community providers throughout the region and will also build capacity for Education Service Centers to support schools with mental health. The primary focus is services for small and rural schools with documented needs, but limited accessibility to mental health resources.

In addition to developing the iWatchTexas app, DPS has worked with local law enforcement and school officials to increase law enforcement presence on campuses and at school events. These efforts are designed to serve as a visual deterrent and reduce response time to an active shooter event. To that end, DPS has instructed each regional director to:

- Closely coordinate with local law enforcement to maximize deterrence and response capabilities, and identify areas where additional training efforts are needed.
- Communicate with schools and establish positive rapport so that indications of suspicious or threatening behavior are immediately reported by school officials directly to local law enforcement or through iWatchTexas.
- Contact school officials to discuss providing work space in schools for state troopers to produce reports.
- Encourage officers to attend large school events such as performances and sporting events.
- Allow officers to eat lunch or take breaks at schools when appropriate and permitted by school administration.

- Conduct physical walk-throughs to provide visual presence and encourage familiarity with facilities.
- Participate in school mentorship programs.
- Conduct routine patrols in and around schools.
- Park conspicuously in front of schools to complete reports.
- Conduct active shooter training with local law enforcement at schools.
- Conduct DPS staff meetings at schools as appropriate.
- Conduct physical fitness training at schools.
- Conduct required physical fitness assessments at schools.

These efforts have been successful, with regional directors, Sergeants, and individual state troopers coordinating with schools such as Mexia ISD to provide enhanced presence at no additional cost to districts.

The Texas Commission on Law Enforcement has administered six school marshal trainings over the summer. As of August 17, an additional 92 school marshals have been appointed, with 73 prospective marshals in the training process. These trainings have been held by TCOLE, and in cooperation with local Councils of Government, the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX), and the Williamson County Sheriff's Office. This training effort has already more than tripled the number of trained and licensed school marshals.

In addition to administering school marshal training, TEEX has conducted 14 active shooter exercise development workshops to provide local officials with the ability to conduct training exercises in their own locations. These workshops have provided to first responders and city, county, and state officials with the ability to develop and practice comprehensive, integrated response plans. Workshops have been conducted statewide, from El Paso to Tyler, and trained over 500 people to take these skills back to their own cities and schools.

ALERT, the Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training program at Texas State University has provided direct training to nearly 1,300 police officers, firefighters, dispatchers, EMS personnel, and others since May 18, 2018. This training includes a course on Civilian Response to Active Shooters (CRASE), designed to train law enforcement to deliver strategies, guidance, and a proven plan for surviving an active shooter event in their local communities. Originally only scheduled for two classes this summer, a grant through the Governor's Criminal Justice Division office enabled ALERT to deliver six classes over the summer, training 269 first responders. This grant funding will provide an additional fifteen classes to be completed by September 25, 2018 and five additional classes after that time.

OTHER EFFORTS

GOVERNOR'S CRIMINAL JUSTICE DIVISION GRANTS

Through Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding from the Office of the Governor's Criminal Justice Division, Region 4 Education Service Center (ESC) developed a team of five staff to support Santa Fe students, staff, and families, including four Mental Health Counselors and a supervising Program Manager. This team will spend the majority of their time in Santa Fe in the near-term, and as needs in Santa Fe evolve, counselors will turn more time to developing a crisis intervention toolkit to help other school personnel intervene in possible subsequent events through both prevention and intervention supports.

To date, the [Office of the Governor's Criminal Justice Division](#) has awarded over \$5.7 million in grants to Santa Fe, surrounding communities, and responding agencies following the Santa Fe school shooting. Funding has been used to support both short and long-term activities such as increased mental health counselors and resources, crisis response services, emergency consultations, psychological first aid, statewide active shooter training, school marshal certifications, behavioral threat assessments, and state level coordination and communication resources to local service providers.

The below organizations have received grant funding assistance for their school safety response:

- City of Santa Fe - \$1,507,985
- Galveston County - \$61,146
- Gulf Coast Center - \$1,242,223
- National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) - \$32,000
- Santa Fe ISD - \$322,000
- Texas Commission on Law Enforcement - \$114,586
- Texas Education Service Center (ESC) Region 4 - \$687,586
- Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) - \$1,121,620
- Texas State University ALERRT Center - \$575,000
- Texas State University School Safety Center - \$81,022

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION GRANT

The federal School Emergency Response to Violence (SERV) grant program, operated by the U.S. Department of Education, awards funds to individual local education agencies (LEAs) directly after an incident of school violence. Santa Fe has applied for these funds. It is expected that the district will receive approximately \$1 million in funding.